

Daniel Vincent Salazar, Jr.

Case No. 1:20-CR-00025-JLT-BAM

Exhibit A (1-7) - Letters of Reference

Dolores T. Gonzalez

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

January 16, 2025

Honorable Jennifer L. Thurston

United States District Court

Subject: Letter of Support for Daniel Vincent Salazar

Dear Judge Thurston,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my son, Daniel Vincent Salazar, who stands before you facing the consequences of his actions. I understand that his choices have caused harm and deeply impacted the victims and their families. I acknowledge the need for justice, but I am also asking for your mercy as Daniel has shown deep remorse and is committed to taking responsibility for his mistakes.

Daniel has endured significant hardships throughout his life. As a young mother, I faced many challenges, including instability, addiction, and abuse. Despite my best efforts, these struggles inevitably affected Daniel. When my late husband became part of our lives, he served as a father figure to Daniel, and for a time, our family experienced stability. Daniel thrived in school and extracurricular activities, supported by my husband and my stepfather. However, our lives were upended in 2010 when my husband tragically passed away in an accident.

This loss was devastating for Daniel, who unfairly blamed himself for my husband's death. Our family fell into hard times once again. I struggled with depression and addiction, and Daniel, as the eldest child, took on responsibilities beyond his years, often acting as a father figure to his siblings. Without adequate support or counseling, Daniel internalized his pain, and as he grew older, he fell in with the wrong crowd, leading to poor decisions and ultimately his current situation.

I firmly believe that Daniel is not beyond redemption. With proper psychological and emotional rehabilitation, he can overcome the childhood trauma and the destructive patterns that have shaped his life.

As a mother, it breaks my heart to see him in this position, but I know he has the strength to turn his life around. Today, Daniel has a son who will be turning 9 years old on February 6. His absence weighs heavily on our family and, most of all, on his son. As a family, we are committed to ensuring that this generational cycle of hardship ends with Daniel. We want to give his son a future filled with stability, love, and the positive presence of a father who has learned from his mistakes and grown stronger because of them. With a strong support system of family and friends, we are committed to standing by him as he works to make amends. Daniel

has expressed deep remorse for the harm he has caused, and he is determined to repay his debt to society and the victims he has impacted.

He is a kind and caring individual at his core, capable of learning from his mistakes and becoming a positive force in the lives of others.

I fully understand the need for accountability and justice. At the same time, I respectfully ask that you consider Daniel's potential for change and grant him the opportunity to rehabilitate himself. I am confident he can learn from his mistakes, contribute positively to society, and make amends for the harm caused

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dolores T. Gonzalez

Armando R. Gonzalez
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1/16/2024

Honorable Jennifer L. Thurston
United States District Court

Dear Judge Thurston,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my step-son, Daniel V. Salazar, who is scheduled to appear before you for sentencing. I understand the gravity of his crimes involving harm to minors and acknowledge the deep and lasting impact of his actions. My intention is not to excuse his behavior, but to offer insight into his character, express my belief in his capacity for change, and humbly request that he be given an opportunity for redemption and rehabilitation.

I have known Daniel for over seven years, beginning when I started a relationship with his mother, Dolores, whom I am now married to. During this time, I have come to know him as a sensitive, kind-hearted individual who struggles with expressing his emotions and understanding his own worth. Despite his personal challenges, he possesses a quick sense of humor and had impressive athletic talent as a young man.

However, Daniel's life has been shaped by significant hardships. His mother became a single parent at 18, and his biological father was absent due to abusive behavior. Throughout his childhood, Daniel assumed a protective role for his younger siblings while being exposed to environments marked by addiction, instability, and harmful influences. His first stepfather, Tony, who served time in and out of prison due to a struggle with addiction, was a central figure in Daniel's life until his tragic accidental death when Daniel was 14. The loss of his grandfather, Jerry, who also battled addiction and incarceration, further compounded Daniel's sense of loss and lack of guidance during formative years. These generational struggles and absence of healthy role models left Daniel without the tools to navigate adulthood and fatherhood responsibly.

I have spoken at length with Daniel about his actions, and he has shared his profound shame, remorse, and sorrow for the harm he caused to the victims, his own son, his mother, and the entire family. He has tearfully expressed his anger at himself as well as his willingness to accept full responsibility for his crimes. He understands the seriousness of his actions and the need for accountability. He also recognizes the profound impact on the victims and has reflected deeply on how his choices violated their safety and trust.

While I know that justice must be served, I also believe firmly in the possibility of personal transformation. Having experienced my own struggles with generational dysfunction, harmful beliefs, and incarceration I have come to understand how change is possible when one is given access to the right tools, support, and rehabilitative opportunities. I believe Daniel has the potential to become a better man and contribute positively to society if given the chance to

confront and address the root causes that led to his harmful behavior.

As a family, we are committed to supporting Daniel through every step of his journey toward accountability and growth. We will provide him with the emotional, Spiritual, and practical support necessary to help him become a responsible and rehabilitated individual. It is my sincere hope that he will be granted the opportunity to demonstrate his remorse through a meaningful path of change and healing, including a sentence closest to the minimum allowed that will provide for him to be able to exemplify his change upon release. I pray that the letter of the law will be applied with restorative and redemptive justice in mind and at heart. I humbly pray for grace and for mercy.

Thank you for considering this letter as part of your deliberations. I am deeply grateful for your time and thoughtfulness in reviewing this matter.

Respectfully,

Armando R. Gonzalez

Sadie Herrera
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

01/15/2025

To the Honorable Judge

Letter of Support for Daniel Salazar

Dear Judge,

I am writing this letter regarding my relationship and support for my oldest brother Daniel Salazar. January 17th he will be incarcerated for 5 years, since then Daniel has shown remorse, personal growth and has spoken about his future in a positive way. Daniel understands the consequences of his actions and the terrible impact his actions had on others. I have no doubt that Daniel will learn from his mistakes and do whatever he can to make a positive impact on our community in the future. Furthermore, Daniel Salazar has developed a dedicated support system. He has guidance and family behind him to help and support him.

I have known my brother Daniel Salazar the whole 23 years of my life. Daniel's biological father was never involved in Daniels life, nor did he ever try to be. Daniel was broken-hearted at an early age due to his biological father's absence. Our mother Dolores Herrera got in a relationship with my father and got pregnant with me when Daniel Salazar was 4 years old. My father Tony Herrera raised Daniel ever since, my father Tony Herrera was in and out of prison. My mother, 3 brothers and I would visit every weekend to visit our father at the prison. This affected Daniel severely; our father was in prison for multiple years and came home around 2008. April 2nd, 2010, a tragedy hit my family at home. My father passed away in a freak accident at our home trying to recover the keys he locked in the house, due to being in a hurry to pick up Daniel from a surgical dentist's appointment. Ever since then Daniel had felt he was at fault for the death of our father. After the death of our father our life crumbled into more pieces. We had to move due to our mother's depression and not wanting to be in the home where our father had passed away at. My mother moved to San Jose California where so we would be around more family and friends. Daniel was only 14 years old, I was 9 years old, Tony (brother) was 8 years old, and Elias (brother) was 5 years old. Our mother was going through so much due to the loss of our father she started doing drugs the first year after our father passing. We would not see her sometimes for days, people in and out of our home, we would not go to school and if we did, we would have no clothes or smell. Daniel Salazar had to be the grown-up and step up at

an early age, he would take care of us and do his best at only 14 years old. With San Jose's high rate of crime and gangs Daniel started to lose more friends and family due to death and started to hang around the wrong group of friends. My Brothers and I have been through a lot of childhood trauma as kids.

Before our father passed away Daniel was a role model to our family and friends. He was involved in every sport and school activity even the spelling bee at his home school. Daniel was a good outgoing kid and a loving big brother. He was always protective of us. All the coaches, teachers and parents loved Daniel. I am not trying to justify his actions or make it ok but since being arrested Daniel has spoken about how remorseful he is and how he takes accountability for his actions. He understands the consequences of his actions and the impact he had on others and he truly feels terrible about what he did. Daniel has done a lot of thinking while serving the past 5 years and he does not need more prison time. He needs therapy and his family. Daniel has an 8-year-old son that needs him home and asks every day for him to come home. Please have mercy and sentence Daniel to the least amount of time possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Sadie M. Herrera

Elias A. Herrera

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Honorable Jennifer L. Thurston

United States District Court

Subject: Letter of Support for Daniel Vincent Salazar

Dear Judge Thurston,

My name is Eli. I am writing you as the youngest brother of Daniel Salazar, to humbly and respectfully ask for the minimum sentence. Daniel has made mistakes, I hope to show you the person he truly is—a devoted brother, father, and protector who has faced extraordinary hardships and yet still strives to care for those he loves.

Daniel has always been my biggest supporter and role model. Growing up, he never missed my basketball or football games, no matter what was going on in his life. He played with me every day to help me improve and made me feel like I mattered. He protected me from bullies, cared for me like a father figure, and always included me in everything, even in small gestures like taking me to the store or asking if I needed anything.

Daniel's life has been filled with challenges that no child or young man should have to endure. His biological father was absent, leaving him heartbroken at a young age. Our father Tony Herrera, stepped into his life, Daniel finally found a father figure. Unfortunately, our family faced instability due to our father's repeated incarceration. Every weekend, Daniel and the rest of us would visit our dad in prison, which left a lasting emotional scar on him.

The darkest chapter of our lives came in 2010 when our father tragically passed away in a freak accident at home while rushing to pick Daniel up from a dental appointment. Daniel was only 14 years old, and he has carried immense guilt ever since. Our family was shattered by this loss. Our mother fell into deep depression, and we were forced to move to San Jose for a fresh start. At just 14, Daniel had to take on responsibilities beyond his years, stepping up as the adult in our family to take care of us while grieving and struggling himself.

In San Jose, Daniel was exposed to an environment of violence and loss. He lost friends and loved ones to gang violence and made poor choices while trying to cope. Despite this, Daniel is not defined by his mistakes. He is a kind, compassionate, and loving person, especially to his young son.

Daniel's son misses him deeply. He talks about his father often and longs for the day they can

be reunited. Daniel's absence has been hard on his son, and I know that Daniel feels the weight of not being able to be there for him as a father. He wants nothing more than to return to his family, be a positive role model for his son, and make amends for his past.

Judge Thurston, I respectfully ask for your compassion in considering a reduced sentence for Daniel. A long sentence would take him further away from his family, especially his young son, who needs him now more than ever. I believe Daniel has the potential to rehabilitate and live a productive, law-abiding life. He is not beyond redemption, and with the chance to return to his family sooner, he can prove that he is capable of change.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for considering my heartfelt plea. I trust in your wisdom and fairness in making this decision.

Respectfully,

Eli Herrera

Sonia Valenzuela



1/16/2024

Dear Honorable Judge,

In March 2025 you will have the task of sentencing my dear cousin, Daniel Salazar. As you do this, please take the time to read my letter to know how much of a good person Daniel is and not focus only on the mistakes he has made. I do understand that 5 years ago my Cousin Daniel Salazar made huge mistakes and caused pain through his actions. As humans we are susceptible to making bad decisions but also have within us the power to change and remedy things to the best of our ability.

Over the past 5 years my cousin has been incarcerated, he has been remorseful and regretful of the actions and hurt he has caused others. While there is no excuse for his actions I know Daniel deeply regrets it and wishes he could take it back. I have been close to my cousin Daniel all my life. We grew up together, went to school together, lived together and through all my years of knowing my cousin he has done nothing but make me laugh and bring me happiness. Daniel is a loving person who made a huge mistake and learned from it. He will never do anything like this because he has learned that it has caused so many people hurt and Daniel is not the type of person to bring this pain to others.

Daniel has not lived the best life as I have been a witness to it. His biological father was never in his life. The father figure he had was my Uncle Tony who passed away from a freak accident when Daniel was just a kid. After that his mom, my Aunt Dolores, was in such pain and depression that she turned to drugs to cope with the loss of her husband and being a single mother taking care of 4 kids by herself. Daniel had to grow up at a young age to take care of his siblings and try to be that father figure in their life. Daniel has not been in trouble all his life and he was always a good kid who went to school and got jobs to support himself and his family. Daniel has a young son who is now 8 years old who looks just like him when he was a kid. I am asking you to think of his child. I am asking for mercy please.

We as a family will support him outside of prison and will be there for him to make sure he does good. Daniel wants to live a better life and to be the best man he can be for himself and his family. I am asking you Judge, from the bottom of my heart to please don't give my Cousin Daniel a harsh punishment. Please give him the chance to show he is a changed person. I am certain he will never do anything like this or hurt anyone again.

Thank you,

Sonia Valenzuela

Tony Herrera

1/16/2025

Dear Honorable Judge,

I am writing to you as the brother of Daniel V Salazar, who is currently facing charges in your court. I would like to offer my support and shed light on the struggles that my brother has gone through, which I believe have significantly impacted his actions and decision-making. I know that he stands before you as a person who has made serious mistakes, but I also believe he is truly remorseful for those mistakes and is ready to grow and make amends.

Growing up, my brother faced generational trauma that deeply affected his mental and emotional health. He was raised in an environment filled with hardships, and on top of that, in 2013, he tragically witnessed the death of one of his closest friends. This traumatic event put an immense toll on him, and I can attest that the emotional pain he endured during that time was beyond what anyone should have to bear.

Witnessing such a loss, especially of someone so close, caused my brother to experience a range of emotional and psychological reactions, including shock, disbelief, and intense grief. He was constantly on edge, struggling with feelings of sadness, anger, and confusion. The impact of such an event can be devastating, leading to feelings of guilt and a deep sense of loss. My brother did not have the resources or support to properly process his grief, and this emotional overload severely impacted his ability to make sound decisions. While it is no excuse, I believe the choices my brother made were heavily influenced by emotional pain, trauma, and an underdeveloped ability to process and evaluate decisions properly.

I understand that there must be consequences for my brother's actions. However, I firmly believe that my brother deserves the opportunity to grow, to heal from his past, and to have a future beyond the mistakes he made. He has shown significant growth since being arrested and has demonstrated a willingness to change. He has the support of our entire family, and we are committed to helping him rebuild his life. We believe that with the right support, guidance, and an opportunity for redemption, he will continue to mature and make positive contributions to society.

I respectfully ask that you consider my brother's difficult background, the trauma he has faced, and his potential for change when making your decision. I believe that he can learn and grow from his past, and that a second chance would allow him to build a better future for himself and contribute to society in a meaningful way.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my letter. I sincerely hope that you will give my brother the opportunity to continue his healing journey and have a future beyond his past mistakes.

Sincerely,

Tony Herrera

To the honorable Judge

Hello my name is Dolores Dominguez, grandmother of Daniel V. Salazar. I am writing this letter in reference to my grandson Daniel on behalf of his incarceration. My grandson has been incarcerated for years now and I know in my heart that he has learned the consequences for his actions and how he has destroyed the life of his victims and their families and also how he has destroyed his own and our family, mainly for his son's life being away this amount of time. I ask that you take into consideration reading my letter and possibly giving him the minimum time. This is his first time getting into this kind of trouble and he has expressed his remorse for his Actions.

I know it was very difficult for him not having his biological father in his life, and the loss of his step father who passed away at a very young age of 32 but nothing is an excuse for his actions. His grandfather and I tried to teach Daniel to learn in school so he could become someone in life. His grandfather had him in football and was his coach and Daniel was the star player for years. He worked for years with a company 100 percent Purity that I got him in to with me and he worked productively. He had just started a new job with Pepsi company here in Modesto when he was arrested. I know that if Daniel has a chance to come home, he will find a job and will work hard and be able to spend time with his son. So I ask for mercy and forgiveness for Him.

Sincerely his grandmother

Dolores Dominguez